on the COVER

Wood ducks, brightly painted by nature, add splashes of vivid color to a local pond

A science researcher takes measurements for a tree survey

A truck hoe operator clears canal banks to keep water flowing

Employees collaborate on document preparation and review

Laboratory personnel prepare water samples for analysis

A boat passes through locks at Lake Okeechobee

From Reclamation to Restoration

The C&SF "silent giant" continues to serve the region

"I have a unique and personal connection with both the history and the future of the C&SF project."

– Len Lindahl
Governing Board Member

First imagined in the late 1940s, the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Control Project was an impressive engineering response to a series of disastrous hurricanes and punishing droughts. Considered one of the largest and most efficient water management systems in the world, the C&SF Project – though far from perfect – continues to be a contemporary asset for the region more than 50 years later.

A system of canals and pumps and earthen levees built atop a complex web of lake, river and wetland ecosystems help make it possible for more than six million people to live, work and play in cities such as Miami and Orlando and Fort Myers. It also makes a multi-billion dollar agriculture industry possible and contributes significantly to state tourism. That same system, however, also left a negative mark on the region's natural systems – impacting water quality, reducing water storage capacity and interrupting flow patterns.

I have a unique and personal connection with both the history and the future of the C&SF project.

As a young engineer in the mid-1960s, one of my first jobs was with a little-known agency called the "Flood Control District." In my position, I helped oversee the building and operation of the massive public works project designed primarily to provide drainage and flood relief. It was an incredible opportunity to actively participate in the early stages of such a landmark effort and I learned much from the experience.

Over the years, regional water management took on a more integrated and interconnected watershed approach. As public expectations changed, the Flood Control District evolved into the South Florida Water Management District – a multi-purpose agency charged with balancing and improving water supply, water quality and natural systems along with its flood control origins. The C&SF "silent giant" continued to be viewed as the backbone of the expanded water management efforts.

Today, I am privileged to serve as an appointed member of the Governing Board. With more real-world experience under my belt than I sometimes care to admit, I now find myself in the role of policy-maker as we move forward with implementing the largest ecosystem restoration effort ever undertaken – centered largely around an update of the C&SF project.

Recognizing both the benefits and limitations of the existing water management system, there is no more exciting place to be right now than here in southern Florida. In concert with the planned environmental and water supply "fixes" to the system, we are also faced with necessary and costly system upgrades to the aging infrastructure – to ensure that the water conveyance aspects can continue to keep up with the region's ever-growing demands.

Working with our federal and local government partners, we are committed to meeting the many resource management challenges facing the region. Our collective goal is to ensure that the silent giant continues to best serve the needs of both the public and the environment.

Three Governing Board Members Sworn in

Nicolás Gutiérrez, Jr. elected Chair and Pamela Brooks-Thomas elected Vice-Chair

Trudi K. Williams

Irela M. Bagué

Kevin McCarty

One reappointed and two new Governing Board members were sworn in on March 12. In other action, the Board elected new officers. Nicolás Gutiérrez, Jr. of Miami was elected Chair and Pamela Brooks-Thomas of Lauderhill, the first African-American woman appointed to the Board, was elected Vice-Chair.

Trudi K. Williams, P.E., owner and CEO of TKW Consulting Engineers Inc. in Fort Myers was reappointed to serve a second four-year term. Originally appointed in 1999, she was elected Board Chair in June 2001. Her appointment area includes Collier, Lee, Hendry and Charlotte counties.

Irela M. Bagué, of Coral Gables, was appointed to succeed Gerardo Fernández as one of two Governing Board members from Miami-Dade County. She is president of Irela Bagué and Associates Inc, a public relations firm.

Kevin McCarty, of Delray Beach, was appointed to succeed Patrick Gleason as the Governing Board member from Palm Beach County. He is a managing director of the Public Finance Department for Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.

LILA: Replicating the Everglades Landscape

Living laboratory brings public face-to-face with Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan

LILA might sound like a beautiful flower, but the Loxahatchee Impoundment Landscape Assessment project – or LILA – is a project that will soon blossom into an important research facility that will replicate the Everglades landscape while providing a reliable science roadmap for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

"We are partners in a phenomenal project," said U.S. Rep. Mark Foley during a ribbon-cutting ceremony Feb. 8 to officially open the new LILA educational kiosk and dedicate the project at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. "If there's anything we can leave as a legacy for the generations of tomorrow, it is the beauty that surrounds us today."

The congressman was joined by representatives from LILA's contributing partners, who each addressed an audience of approximately 100: South Florida Water Management District; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Department of the Interior; and the Refuge.

Now nearing the completion of the construction phase, LILA will assist scientists in developing performance measures for the Everglades restoration plan.

LILA will divide two existing 34-acre impoundments into four 17-acre impoundments constructed to physically mimic the Everglades landscape. A pumping station will be used to recirculate water, allowing scientists to control water levels and flow. Water will be manipulated to induce responses by wildlife, tree islands, and ridge-and-slough communities. Scientists and engineers will use the LILA project to test restoration plans on a small scale before applying them to the large-scale Everglades ecosystem. The results of these studies will better define the hydrologic patterns that will sustain a healthy Everglades.

How you can get a bird's-eye view

LILA provides an ideal opportunity for the public to learn about the Everglades restoration plan. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge visitors are invited to take a first-hand look at the progress of the LILA project. An eight-panel educational kiosk near the site provides visitors with information about the project, and opportunities will be available for guided tours of the impoundments. When LILA is complete, visitors can spend a morning watching a flock of wading birds feed in a restored slough habitat at the same time that scientists are collecting valuable information to support the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

The LILA project and educational kiosk are located at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, 10216 Lee Road, Boynton Beach. For directions or additional information, call (561) 732-3684.